Treasure

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Treasure

by Anna_Jay

Summary

When Will is about to be burned at the stake he is saved by a dragon who wishes to add him to his hoard.

Notes

Saw a prompt a while ago about wanting Dragon!Hannibal in some form or another. Thought I would give this a try. There will be later chapters, but it will mostly be whenever I have time to write or am taking a break from writing other stories. For those waiting for the next (and going to be final chapter) of Chesapeake Mafia it is going to be up by next weekend. I already have about half of it written.

Chapter 1

Will struggled against his restrains, but it was useless with his body already bruised and broken. The villagers had forced him from his home, leading him away and up the mountain. When he stumbled they dragged him the rest of the way to the Sinner's Pike. With tears running down his bleeding face, Will watched as men and a few women set up dried wood and kindling around him. Struggling once more, Will tried to remove the cloth placed in his mouth to silence his pleading and screaming, but it was no use.

Finally, the mob finished with their preparations and formed a circle around him. The priest stepped forward, parchment paper held firmly in his grasp as he began to list Will's sins.

“William Graham, you are hereby deemed a danger to our community with your spouting of false lies and wicked words against others. You have also been witnessed talking and seeing things which are not there. It is with this conclusion we brand you as a witch, and only God can purge you of your sins.”

Will screamed behind his gag, shaking his head in denial as the mob began to cheer for his demise. He wasn't a witch! He wasn't crazy, but he could not deny what was said. He did see things, hear things, but he wasn't a witch. He didn't want to die. Not like this. Fresh tears slid down his face as the cheers grew louder and louder, men gathering torches and coming closer to the pile of kindle around his feet. Will refused to watch his end come, choosing to shut his eyes and pray to a God who had forsaken him.

With the blood pounding in his ears, Will didn't know when the shouting of joy turned to to screams of terror. Snapping his eyes open, he watched as many villagers gaped and pointed at the sky.

A great gust of wind fell upon them, extinguishing the flames from the torches and knocking several people to the ground. Will tried to move his head around to see what what happening, but his bonds restricted any movement. Many of the mob fled, but some stayed, swords and arrows drawn. A large shadow fell upon them, accompanied by a thunderous “thump” and shaking of the ground.

Will's eyes widened, his head shaking as he took in what was happening.

They don't exist. They *can't* exist.

But he was proven wrong when a sinister growl filled the air, sending many of the remaining villagers running down the mountain. The remaining ones backed away, but still held their weapons aloft.

“Begone, dragon!” one of the men cried, raising his sword threateningly.

Will flinched when the growl escalated into a roar, ducking his head as the shadow moved and a jet of fire streamed over his head. The men screamed, those who were struck directly

with the flames were immediately turned to ash. The ones who weren't directly hit were blasted back from the heat.

Will couldn't look away, watching as the men tried to drag themselves to safety. He winced when he heard the growling again, this time closer. Moving his head as much as he was able to, Will watched as the beast came into view.

Unblinking red eyes watched him, boring into his own as the dragon drew closer. Will flinched, squeezing his eyes shut, but he didn't meet flames or teeth. Instead, the creature sniffed him, the power of his breath causing Will's hair to fly about. Daring to look, Will opened his eyes and watched as the dragon continued to smell him. His adrenaline was starting to wear down, and his body began to shake. He whined behind his gag, trying to plead with it to end his suffering. He wished to live, but his chances were next to none. Hopefully the dragon would incinerate him like he did with the other men, or simply eat him in one go.

The dragon took one more sniff before tilting its head. Reaching forward, it opened it's giant maw and grasped gently at the gag before pulling it off. Will gasped, his mouth dry as he tried to speak.

“Pl...please,” he begged, slumping against the wooden pike. “Please...”

The dragon continued to stare before finally blinking. Suddenly, the dragon closed in, biting at the ropes that bound Will. Will cried out as he lost his balance and fell upon the ground, his body in too much pain to try and catch himself.

“I won't kill you, little human,” a deep voice rumbled, making Will flinch.

Because of his position on the ground, Will couldn't see what the dragon was doing. He listened as it moved above him before he felt something gently grasp him. With his adrenaline finally gone and his body limp, Will closed his eyes as the darkness consumed his vision and let himself be picked up and carried away.

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Will wasn't expecting to open his eyes. When he did wake, he was *definitely* not expecting to see a large cavernous ceiling and piles upon piles of gold. Will tried to sit up, but his body was still in pain. However, before he could move, warm hands placed themselves over his shoulders and helped him lie down once more.

“Don't move, little human,” a familiar deep voice murmured. “You are still injured.”

Will couldn't respond, his voice caught in his throat as he took in the image of a man leaning over him. He was not human, that was for sure. His eyes glowed with an unnatural light, slitted pupils almost invisible. He might have been able to pass off as human if it were not for the dark scales that littered along the corners of his eyes.

Will continued to stare, and the man smiled.

“Lost your voice, little one?” the man teased, a jagged smile gracing his features. Taking one look at the sharp teeth snapped Will out of his stupor. He grasped the man's shoulders and shoved him off. The man stumbled, and Will took his momentary surprise to struggle to his feet. Even though he was sore and hurting, he managed to run, slipping and sliding on the gold coins.

A deep growl echoed throughout the cavern, and Will soon found himself sprawled on the floor with the dragon towering over him. Will brought his arms up as the beast crowded him, the heat from his breath making him sweat.

“That was not wise, little human,” he growled, smoke curling from its bared teeth. “I spared your life and this is how you repay me? It appears I've made a mistake in letting you live.” The dragon opened his mouth wider and the heat increased. Will whimpered and hid his face. He could feel tears leak out of the corners of his eyes as he curled into a ball.

Be quick, he prayed. *Please don't be painful.*

Will was left waiting, trying to contain his sobs the best he could. However, one escaped when human hands embraced him, bringing him close to a warm chest. Unable to contain them any more, he began to sob openly, his nerves completely shot from the earlier events. Giving in, he allowed himself to be positioned against the now human dragon. He was gently hushed, a taloned hand carding carefully though his curls while the other scratched lightly along his back.

“Just do it!” Will's voice cracked as he shouted, making him fall into a coughing fit. The dragon soothed him, murmuring in a different tongue, stroking Will's throat to help ease the pain.

“Do what, little one?”

“K-kill me. Eat me. *Burn* me.” Will choked, his throat raw from screaming. More tears burst forth despite his efforts to dam them. “Anything, just don't play with me. I can't... I can't.” The dragon shushed him, rocking the crying man.

When he finally quieted down, the dragon-man took his hand out of his hair and wiped his tears. Will risked looking up into the hellish eyes, but couldn't keep eye-contact for very long. The dragon made a sympathetic noise as he continued to rub Will's cheek.

“...Perhaps I over reacted.” He finally said, voice soft and soothing. Will hiccuped in response, causing the dragon to pull him closer. “I apologize, little one, but I will not stand for rudeness. I will forgive your actions. You've been through a traumatic experience.” The dragon fell silent once more, scanning Will's bruised face as the man tried to control his breathing. Thinking the dragon was waiting for recognition, he shakily nodded his head, refusing to meet his eyes.

This appeased the dragon, a smile crossing his face. Will whimpered when he once again saw the sharp teeth. He tried to squirm away, but the dragon wouldn't let him out of his grasp. When he calmed again, the dragon stood, taking Will with him. Will gasped, clinging to him as he walked along the piles of gold, not once disturbing the coins.

“How do you do that?” Will croaked, his curiosity winning over his fear. Anything to distract him from losing it again. When the dragon looked at him suspiciously, Will clarified. “The coins. They're not moving.”

The dragon smiled again, a mischievous glint in his eyes. “Maybe I'll tell you one day,” he promised. Will perked at that. Some day? “But right now you need to rest. I've already prepared a nest for you.”

Nest? Like a bird nest? Will was about to ask when the dragon left the sea of gold coins behind and entered what looked like a private chamber. The room was lit with torches and there were dozens upon dozens of blankets and pillows all arranged in the center. The dragon placed Will down gently upon them, and Will marveled at the softness. Drowsiness fell upon him and he soon closed his eyes, unable to pay attention to what the dragon was doing around him.

He must have dozed off for he felt arms curl around him. He protested, but was easily shushed as the dragon pulled him into a warm embrace. Will gave in and slipped his eyes shut once more, enjoying the heat radiating off of the man's body.

“Hannibal.”

Will opened his eyes once more, blinking up at the watchful crimson eyes. Silence fell upon them before the dragon moved closer. “My name is Hannibal.” The dragon repeated, nuzzling the top of Will's head. Will remained quiet, processing this new information. He brought a hand up and placed it on the man's shoulder. Only now with his mind calm did he notice he had a few black scales scattered across his body, clustering around his shoulders, arms, and chest. They looked beautiful under the torch light, the flames making them glitter. Will marveled at them before finally resting against the dragon's chest.

“My name is William.” he whispered.

Hannibal took a slow, deep breath before releasing it.

“William.” the dragon whispered back, playing with the words as he said them. Will could feel the smile spread on the dragon's face. “*My* William.” Hannibal growled, his arms tightening around the smaller man. Will gasped as he tried to reposition himself, but he could not move.

“Rest, dearest Will,” Hannibal purred, one hand stroking his back, lulling him back into a drowsy state. As he fell into slumber, the dragon's purring increased. “I always take care of what's mine."

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will watched as Hannibal rearranged his horde and make sure everything was where it should be. It had been days since Will became Hannibal's first living treasure. The dragon made sure Will got enough food to eat, going out each morning before his new pet woke up and catching sheep or cows to bring back. Will never witnessed him preparing the meals, but each one was fully cooked to perfection. Hannibal never ate with him, stating he had already caught his meal. Will was too afraid to ask what his meal consisted of, not wanting to know if it was animal or human.

As he ate, Hannibal would watch him, eyes lingering on his mouth and throat. Absently Will wondered if Hannibal was fattening him up to eat later but discarded the idea. If the dragon wanted to eat him he would have done it already. He was safe from the dragon, for now.

Presently, Hannibal was standing next to a statue, hand on his chin as he considered the right angle to position it. Will continued to watch from his perch, head propped up by his hand. He tried to help earlier, but Hannibal wouldn't have it. He picked Will up and plopped him down on a throne sitting in the middle of the cave and told him to stay.

Will's eyes drooped, and a yawn threatened to sneak past his lips. In the first two days of his new arrangement Will slept soundly. It was only the third night he began to have nightmares. He used to have them when he lived in the village with visions of red and skeletons. While he still had those horrors haunting his mind, he also had dreams of burning. Of all the ways he could die he feared being burned the most. He'd rather be eaten by Hannibal than face the flames.

“What are you thinking about?” the dragon asked, still facing the statue.

“Hmm... About how you should move the statue over by the pillar.”

Hannibal looked over at where the marble pillar was before looking back at the statue. “I believe you are correct.” And with little effort the dragon picked up the large statue and moved it to its new home. The dragon stepped back and admired the new location and nodded. “Yes, this will work.”

The dragon turned to Will and smiled his toothy grin. Will smiled back. He had to admit, the dragon was growing on him.

Hannibal came to stand next to Will's throne, leaning against it as he examined Will. The human shifted under the scrutiny and ran a hand through his hair. “Is there something on me?”

The dragon smiled before shaking his head. “Nothing's wrong, but I want to ask you something.”

“Oh?” Will encouraged.

Hannibal continued to stare before bending down to pick up a gem.

“Why were they going to kill you?”

“I...” Will was a little surprised at the question. Hannibal hadn't brought up the subject before, and Will wondered if perhaps he was allowing Will a grace period before bringing up a traumatizing event. Will opened his mouth, but ended up closing it again. “I... I don't want to talk about it.”

Hannibal remained silent as he examined the gem in his palm. The torch light reflected off of it and littered the hand with different shades of blue. He hummed as he rolled it around before pocketing it. It was another one of Hannibal's strange habits Will marveled at. The dragon wore elegant clothing, always looking well put together and commanding. The first time they met Hannibal was only wearing trousers, but the next day he wore an entirely black, silky outfit. Will wouldn't admit how beautifully it brought out the man's black scales.

“It might help to talk about it. Don't think I haven't noticed your nightmares.” Will looked down in embarrassment but Hannibal made him look back up. “There's nothing wrong with dreams, little human. I always have an ear open should you need it.”

Will gulped and nodded. Hannibal released him and turned to his horde again. “Now, where should I put you.” He mumbled as he picked up a large mirror. Will couldn't help but shake his head as the dragon continued on with his arranging.

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Will didn't like how the dragon watched him as he prepared for bed. It wasn't malicious or devious, it just was completely blank. The red eyes followed him as he removed his clothes and replaced them with sleepwear, followed as he put his day clothes away in a basket dedicated to washing, and finally followed as he made his way to the nest.

“Are you sure you don't want to talk about your dreams?” the dragon asked as Will covered himself with furs. Will ignored Hannibal as long as possible, distracting himself by trying to make his spot as comfortable as possible. Feeling he had put it off long enough, Will looked up and smiled.

“I'm sure, Hannibal.”

The dragon's mouth twitched at the use of his name, but he continued to frown. Will yawned and curled up in his bedding and hoped Hannibal wouldn't ask anymore. He just didn't want to talk about it and because it was brought up he feared his dreams would be even fresher this time round.

Hannibal soon joined him and pulled him flush to his body. The dragon was unnaturally warm and Will had to squirm to get into a more comfortable position. He listened as Hannibal's breathing calmed and evened out, but he knew he wasn't truly asleep yet. Will

didn't mind. He gently traced the scales along his shoulders causing a shiver to run through Hannibal's body. Shortly after, the dragon began to purr.

Will stopped. He didn't know dragons could purr. Then again, this was the only living dragon he had ever met. If anything, Hannibal acted more like a giant cat than a reptile. The purring stopped and Hannibal opened his eyes.

“Why did you stop, human.” Hannibal growled. “Continue.”

It took all of Will's will power not to burst into laughter and continued to pet the dragon. The purring started up again, and Hannibal relaxed against the smaller body, practically crushing him beneath him. Will let out a light chuckle, accepting his fate as a bed and moved his hand along the scales until he fell asleep.

There was nothing but darkness. Will tried to move, but something was keeping rooted in place. He struggled, he thrashed, but he wouldn't budge. The darkness slowly began to lighten and soon black was replaced by red. Will closed his eyes in terror. He knew what was coming next, but it was in vain. No matter what he did he was forced to watch as bodies upon bodies began to appear. Most of them were men, but soon women and children joined the piles. Will screamed as they got up from their places with each and everyone of them looking at him.

“It's coming.” one of them spoke.

“It's coming.” said another.

“It's coming.” replied a third.

“What's coming?” Will shouted, but none of them heard him. The voices began to rise and rise as they continued to chant: it's coming, it's coming, it's coming.

“What's coming?” Will spun around, looking for answers among the dead. They began to walk closer and closer and one grabbed him by the arm.

“It's coming.” it whispered.

“What is?”

“Your doom.” a new voice replied. The bodies made way and the priest from the village stood in front of Will. Will tried to shout as he was pulled by hundreds of arms and tied to a stake. The priest held a burning torch in his hand, his head concealed with a hood.

“Please, I did nothing wrong! I didn't do anything!” Will cried as the priest brought the flames closer and closer to the pile beneath Will's feet. He screamed as the brush caught fire and lapped at his feet. He screamed and screamed, but the bodies cheered as he was slowly consumed in red.

A roar broke over the shouts, and Will felt a force push him to the ground. But he continued to scream. He was on fire. He was going to die.

*"*William, wake up, now*!" a voice thundered and Will opened his eyes.*

Fire red eyes bore into him and he flinched away. Or, at least he tried to. He was pinned beneath the dragon, Hannibal's clawed hands digging dangerously into his shoulders. With his inability to move so closely related to his dream and the proximity of Hannibal, Will began to scream.

Hannibal immediately released him, and Will curled into a ball.

"Don't hurt me, please! I didn't do anything. I swear I didn't do anything."

"William." the dragon broke through his haze. He laid a cautious hand on his human's lower back and rubbed circles into his skin. Will gasped for air as he tried to calm himself. He was on the verge of tears, but he refused to cry. He's cried enough for one life time. He didn't want to look weak in front of Hannibal.

With one last gulp Will slowly sat up. Hannibal backed away, but he stayed within arms distance. Will opened his mouth to thank him when he shifted his hand and coins began to rattle. He paused.

"This isn't the nest." he croaked.

"No, you began to walk in your sleep." Hannibal confirmed. He tilted his head. "Is that normal?"

Will flinched and looked away. Taking it as a negative, Hannibal continued. "Does this happen often?"

"Sometimes." Will whispered. "But I have it under control."

"Arguable." the dragon said. He sighed before standing and dragged Will with him. Before Will could say otherwise Hannibal flung him over his shoulder.

"Hey!" Will objected, but there was little else he could do. He was tired and embarrassed and all he wanted was a good night's sleep. However, he doubted he would get the latter.

Hannibal brought him back to the nest and set him upright once more. In an instant, Hannibal transformed into his true form and his massive form curled up on the cushions.

"Hannibal what are you—hey!"

Will was cut off as the dragon grasped him by his shirt and plopped him down between his front paws.

“Oi! What are you doing?” Will squeaked. Hannibal ignored him and laid his head down between his paws, trapping Will in a cage of warmth and scales.

“Go back to sleep, pet.” Hannibal growled, his voice sending vibrations through Will's body. “We will talk in the morning.”

The human gritted his teeth and refused to close his eyes. Hannibal didn't seem to notice; his eyes were shut the moment his ensured Will wouldn't be going anywhere. Will huffed, but he did feel sleepy. He didn't want to dream, didn't want to be revisited by the specters that lived there. Sighing, Will watched as Hannibal breathed, his giant body moving Will with every inhale. He reached up and petted along the scaled neck. On a whim, he scratched where the jaw meets the neck, and Hannibal purred. Will gasped in shock but soon found it soothing. He continued his ministrations until his couldn't hold his hand up any longer.

Hannibal continued to purr, and Will fell into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter End Notes

Honestly, I have no idea where this story is going. Probably just going to be filled with day to day interactions between Will and Dragon!Hannibal. If there is something you would like to see between Hannibal and Will drop me a comment. I'll take it into consideration and maybe write it in :D
Thank-you for your comments and kudos, and I'll see you next update.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I... See things,” Will began, grabbing coins and having them run through his fingers. He watched as they slid and chimed against each other all the while refusing to look at the dragon. If Hannibal wanted an explanation, then he was going to get it on Will's terms. He sat across form Hannibal on the piles of treasure on a cushion he had found during his idle wandering around the cave while Hannibal chose to sit directly on the coins. If he was uncomfortable he didn't show it.

“What sort of things?” Hannibal encouraged when Will fell silent. He kept his hands in his lap which Will was grateful after what happened last night. Will pulled his robe around him before continuing.

“Um, things that aren't real, or at least I think they aren't real. I... I've seen visions of death. Sometimes I recognize them, sometimes I don't...” Will fell silent as he picked up a necklace. The gold glittered prettily, but Will put it back down just as quickly as he picked it up. “I've had voices telling me of how they died or accuse me of their deaths. They try to hurt me, one way or another.”

“Are you always asleep when you have these visions?” Hannibal asked.

“No, I've had them when I'm awake, too. I haven't had a waking vision since I've been here, though.” The dragon smiled, but Will ignored it. “They come at random moments: when I'm at home, when I'm fishing, when I'm in the village, anywhere. It got so bad that I was forced to move out into the forest.”

“But you had to go into the village for food,” Hannibal said, his red eyes intense. “They wouldn't keep you from receiving food.”

Will snorted. “They tried. At first everyone avoided me and the market was deserted each time I went there. But soon people stopped being afraid of me and started to become... Angry.”

He rubbed a spot on his right side from where one of the villagers struck him with a broom handle. It was hard to breathe for a long time after that incident.

The dragon watched as Will stroked at the phantom pain before trying to make eye contact. Will refused. “What of your sleep walking? Is that new?”

“No, no I've always been a sleep walker. Even when I was little. The visions... They don't help.” He ran a hand over his face and tugged at his hair. He stopped himself when he saw Hannibal's arm rise to pull it away. “My visions often chase me and want to hurt me. Usually I am able to stay in my bed or spot when I have them, but not always. On more occasions

than I would like to recount I've woken up in the middle of the forest when they are particularity bad."

"Did no one help you?"

"Well, why would they help me? I ranked under the village idiot. As far as they were concerned I could have fallen off a cliff and they wouldn't have even missed me. Why do you think they were trying to burn me at the stake?"

Hannibal didn't answer. He suddenly stood up and Will jumped.

"W-where are you going?" he called after him, but Hannibal didn't answer. Will jumped to his feet and ran after him. "Hannibal, where are you going?"

He followed him to the edge where the piles of gold stop. As soon as Hannibal crossed the threshold Will halted in his tracks. The first rule Hannibal had told him he had to obey was to never cross this section. He was allowed to go to any of the other caves, but he wasn't allowed to go this way. The gold coins acted as a safety zone. Where there was gold he could go, but where the ground was bare he was not. Will had a sneaking suspicion that this cave lead to the outside.

Will stood and watched Hannibal. The dragon looked over his shoulder and Will must have looked pitiful for he gave him a soft smile.

"I'll return shortly. There's something I need to do. Try to get some rest, pet. It'll do you some good." And he turned the corner and was gone.

Will continued to stand in his spot before sighing. That dragon. What was he up to? Looking forlornly in the direction of the entrance, Will forced himself to head back to the nest. Maybe a nap would be good.

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Will didn't sleep. Instead he decided to explore his new home some more. He had done a little searching, but Hannibal was always with him one way or another. If Will got up and moved to a new location Hannibal was sure to follow. The dragon didn't seem to like him going off on his own, and Will wasn't sure whether the dragon didn't like him being alone with his treasure or Will being alone period. Will followed a path he had yet to take and was surprised at what he found at the end.

It was a lake. A giant lake with walls lined with unlit torches and a high, open ceiling. Will gasped as he took in the fresh air and blue sky peeking through the ceiling. It was so beautiful. Looking at the water Will suddenly became aware of how clammy his skin felt. It had been days since he was able to bathe, and Hannibal had yet to comment on his smell. He figured it couldn't hurt to have a quick dip. He didn't know when the dragon was coming back, so he might as well bathe. He peered into the crystal clear water but didn't see any living creatures. He figured he would have found some frogs or even small fish, but there wasn't any wildlife.

Maybe Hannibal's presence keeps them away, Will thought. After some deliberation, he began to remove his clothes.

The water was cool, but at least it was warmer than the pond Will used to bathe in by his house. The sand shifted under his feet and the water became cloudy, but it settled quickly. He laughed as the sand tickled his toes and as he got to the deeper parts he kicked off and started to swim. It was too bad he didn't have any soap, but then again he didn't think he'd want to sully the water. He scrubbed as best he could, trying to get the dirt and grime from the past few days off. When he felt he could do no more he simply floated about, looking up through the opening in the ceiling and admiring the blue sky. He didn't think he'd miss it, but after spending days in the dark caves and torchlight he found himself craving to go outside. Maybe he could ask Hannibal if he could go out. With his supervision, of course.

Will sighed before taking a breath and ducking under. He went to touch the bottom, finding the lake was not that deep, and resurfaced once more. He wiped the water from his eyes and turned to go back to shore, and he nearly had a heart attack.

Hannibal was lounging in his dragon form, his hellish eyes watching in amusement.

“When did you return?” Will called out, and the dragon gave an equivalent to a shrug.

“Not too long ago, pet. You seem to be enjoying yourself.”

Will didn't answer as he made his way back to shore. He got out of the water, unconcerned as Hannibal watched him. The dragon had seen him naked on a few accounts but for some reason Will wasn't disturbed or shy in his presence. He chalked it up to Hannibal being Hannibal and a dragon. He was just a pet, nothing more.

Will went to pick his clothes up when he saw they weren't there. “Hannibal, what did you do with my clothes.”

“I assure you I have no idea.” the dragon said with amusment. Will glared up at him before trying to wipe the excess water off his arms.

“Are you going to tell me where you went?” he asked. He jumped as Hannibal lowered his massive head to his level and backed away. “...What are you doing, Hannibal.”

Instead of answering, Hannibal opened his giant maw and blew a gust of warm air. Will almost fell to the ground at the force and held his hands up to protect his face from the heat. The water clinging to his skin sizzled as it evaporated and left his body in a tingling state.

Hannibal stopped and looked at his work, and he chuckled at the sight of Will's hair.

“There, much better.” The dragon nodded before reverting to his human form. He held out a clean robe and wrapped Will in it. “Now, how about we do something about your hair.”

Will scowled and ran his fingers through the frizzy strands. “You could have warned me.”

“But where's the fun in that?” Hannibal said with a smile and lead Will away from the lake.

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Hannibal combed the brush though Will's hair, stroking the curls down into a tamed state. They wouldn't stay down, but neither party was concerned. Will was almost asleep, relaxed by the gentle ministrations. How long has it been since someone had brushed his hair? The only time he could think was when he was still a small child and his mother was alive. Will melted into the touches, letting Hannibal move his head as he saw fit.

Hannibal put the brush down after a little while, but he began to run his fingers through the glossy strands. Eventually Will found himself laying down with his head in Hannibal's lap as the dragon continued to pet him. If he could he would have purred.

“I had some business to take care of,” Hannibal broke the silence, and Will blinked his eyes blearily.

“What kind of business?” Will slurred, and Hannibal smiled as he ran one hand along an unshaven cheek.

“Just something that I had been meaning to do for awhile now. It's been taken care of now, so you don't need to worry.”

Will hummed in agreement, not caring at the moment. He could fall asleep right now if he wanted to, and he really did want to. He felt safe and secure, two things he never thought he would have again, especially in the hands of a dragon. Will smiled as he settled his head in a more comfortable position and sighed. If this was what being Hannibal's pet entailed, then he didn't mind. He didn't mind one bit.

Chapter End Notes

I should be working on "Anchor in a Lockdown", but instead I'm working on this fluff.

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Chapter 4

Will was bored. He had explored all the caves he was allowed to enter, swam in the lake a dozen times, and he organized a small cove Hannibal designated as his. It wasn't so bad when the dragon was there, both parties curling up together and sharing stories or simply enjoying each other's company. However, Hannibal was gone most of the day, leaving Will to entertain himself. At first, Will was fine with this arrangement, but after weeks of being cooped up in his new home with only the open skylight in the lake Will was starting to become bored and antsy.

Which was why Will found himself standing on the edge of the gold coins leading to the entrance of the cave. He never ventured beyond, for he knew Hannibal would find out. The dragon had the nose of a hound and could easily find Will wherever he went. Will dug the toe of his boots into the coins, causing them to clink and move against each other. He stood a moment longer before daring to step forward and onto the solid cave floor.

Nothing happened, as Will speculated. He took another cautious step, and then another before he was steadily walking toward the path that lead to the entrance. He kept telling himself he was only going to peek outside. He wasn't going to actually leave the cave. Usually, or so he had heard, dragons liked to have their caves in the mountains or near volcanoes. He had every reason to believe the latter was true. All of the caves except the lake room were warm, and even then the water in the lake was above usual temperatures. There was no real way for Will to escape, for it would be too high for him to safely get down. With that in mind, Will reassured himself enough to finally take the last steps and turn the corner.

Bright light shone at the end of a long tunnel, and Will felt his heart leap. Just seeing the natural light within grasp caused Will to practically sprint down the tunnel and into the sunlight.

A strong gust of wind greeted Will as he exited the tunnel, his hair flying as he closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Taking in the warmth of the sun, Will opened his eyes and observed his surroundings. Correct in his assumptions, Will stood at the edge of a rocky cliff overlooking a vast forest. He took his time and looked for any familiar land marks, but he couldn't find any. The forest below was a sea of green, the trees so close together Will could not see the ground below. The tops swayed in the wind, rustling against each other to join in the natural orchestra.

Will smiled and moved with the wind, closing his eyes in contentment and enjoying his short time before he had to return to the cave. He was about to sit down when something made him pause. What was that sound?

Will tilted his head and strained his ears over the movement of the leaves and the whistle of the wind. There, very faint, was a sharp cry, one associated with dogs and other canines. Will's heart clenched as he listened to the distressed animal, the cries of pain growing more and more urgent.

Scanning the cliff, Will sought a way down, and quickly located a manageable section of the rocky face. He started down easily enough, but about halfway it proved to be more hazardous. He lost his footing a number of times, but it was on particularly tricky and dubious foot hold that the section broke off completely, causing Will to plummet into the trees below. He barely had enough time to scream before he crashed into the branches, bouncing off the limbs which pained gasps until he met his final destination with the ground. He laid there for a moment, his body thrumming in pain as he tried to figure out what was broken and what was safe to move.

Tentatively, he pushed himself up, hissing and gasping in pain as his muscles protested. Neither of his arms were broken and his legs seemed safe as well. However, he discovered a semi-large cut on his forehead and forearm, and his ribs protested strongly when he tried to breathe. But he was perfectly fine. For now.

Will looked up in a vain attempt to see the cave, but he couldn't see anything past the foliage. He hoped Hannibal wouldn't go on a rampage looking for him, or worse, eat him in his anger. The dragon was level headed and Will knew he would think rationally, but he was still not looking forward to the dragon's inevitable ire. The whine called for Will's attention once more, and he set out into the unknown forest to find the source.

It didn't take long for Will to stumble upon the poor creature. A dog with brown and black fur laid limply on the ground, its fur matted in dirt and mud that ran rightly over its visible ribs. One hind leg was caught securely in a bear trap, the metal teeth biting into the flesh to reveal bone. Flies had already begun to swarm the poor creature who didn't have the energy to fend them off. Will knew if he didn't do something the dog would perish.

He approached slowly, opening both hands to show the dog he meant to harm and crouched down. The dog didn't move, didn't even snarl. He just watched Will with tired eyes.

“It's okay,” Will said softly, easing a hand closer. “Everything will be okay. You'll be fine in no time.”

Will placed his hand by the dog's nose, and the dog sniffed him. After he was satisfied the dog wouldn't attempt to bite him, Will shucked off his shirt and wrapped it around his hands. He moved to where he could easily grab hold of the metal claws, squeezed his fingers in the small open gap, and tried to pull it open. The dog cried in pain and squirmed, but Will continued to pull. He had to be careful. One wrong move, one slip of the hand and the jaws would snap shut again, severing fingers and injuring the dog more. When the opening was big enough, he braced one of his heels against one toothed edge, and he pried the trap open, freeing the dog.

Ensuring the dog was out of the trap, Will let it fall shut, careful to pull his fingers and foot away. He wiped his brow and turned to the dog, finding him nursing his leg. The limb looked infected and Will feared it would have to be amputated.

“Here, boy, let me look at that,” he said softly and gently took the leg in hand. The dog did not bite him, whining as Will prodded and examined it. There was little Will could do without proper herbs or medicine and the only way he was going to get that was back at the cave.

Will tried once again to see the cave through the trees when the dog began to lick his face. Will jumped in surprise, but he smiled and petted the dog, encouraging him. The dog started to wag his tail.

“Don’t worry, boy. Everything will be okay,” the wind started to pick up and the sky seemed to darken through the leaves. “Hopefully.”

Will wrapped the dog’s leg in his shirt and picked him up. The dog was small enough to carry, but Will worried about how easy it was to pick him up. The dog gave Will another few licks as he carried him, but soon laid his head down on his shoulder, his little energy sapped.

Will pulled the dog closer and hurried to the mountain — or volcano, Will still wasn’t sure. However, he didn’t have a plan as he stood along the edge. How was he going to haul the dog and himself back up the cliff? Even if he could find footholds, Will was handicapped with only one hand, and he was still in pain from his earlier fall. He was stuck.

The wind, which was already increasing, spiked, and before Will could wonder what was happening, he found himself firmly grasped and hauled into the sky. Will let out a startled yelp as the ground disappeared from beneath him, his grasp on the dog tightening, but he soon caught sight of familiar claws gripped around his waist. Just as soon as he was picked up Will was put back down onto solid ground, back onto the cliff. He fell inelegantly onto his bottom, trying to keep the dog from getting hurt any further. The ground shook as Hannibal landed, his scales shining as he transformed into his human form. He stood before Will, his face unreadable.

“You disobeyed me,” the dragon finally said, disappointment laced in his works. Will flinched and ducked his head, avoiding the cold eyes.

“Please, he needs help,” Will said, directing Hannibal’s attention to the poor dog in his arms. The dog’s breathing was labored and he was beginning to shake. Will feared the sudden move had upset the injury and he lowered the dog in order to examine the leg. The scabs had been broken open and blood began to pour sluggishly, mixing with yellow puss and matted dirt. Will looked up at Hannibal, who was still looking down indifferently at him.

“Please, you can punish me later, but please help him.”

Red eyes lazily settled on the poor mutt, blinking at him in a bored fashion. Will could see the dragon was still angry. He could see how the hellish pupils were barely visible, how his clawed hands twitched in reigned in power. Will hoped Hannibal wouldn’t take out his anger on the dog. He would do anything to prevent any further harm to come to him.

Finally, Hannibal moved around Will’s crouched form, beckoning Will to follow him. Will smiled and gently picked up the dog, a new spring in his step as he returned to the depths of the caves.

A long bath, a jar of mysterious magic cream as Will called it, and a few bandages later left the dog, now named Winston, sparkling clean and healed. The wound was near healed after the magic cream had been applied, the skin having healed over the bone. It was still broken, but Hannibal assured Will the limb would not have to be removed and the infection should be gone in a couple days.

Will smiled down at Winston as he slept comfortably in Will's treasure room. Hannibal didn't want the dog in their bedroom, which Will was fine with. As long as Winston got better and had a place to sleep. He stroked the dog's head one last time before leaving to find the dragon.

Hannibal was rearranging his treasure, his posture stiff as he overlooked his gold. Will took a few tentative steps before stopping. The dragon had barely said a word to him the entire time they were treating Winston, responding only when Will asked a question, and even that was cold and clipped. Will knew he had crossed a line with the dragon's trust. However, Hannibal couldn't expect him to stay cooped in the caves forever. He was a living being that needed sunlight and fresh air to thrive.

As he watched Hannibal move around, Will found himself suddenly feeling angry. How dare Hannibal be upset with him. He had no right. Will could leave whenever he liked; he lived here, too.

Anger beginning to build in his chest, Will moved forward to give the dragon a piece of his mind. He wasn't expecting, however, the ground to shift beneath his feet.

Will gave a cry as coins slipped beneath his feet, sending him down the hill of gold which he was unable to stop until he was at the bottom. He hissed in pain, his injuries from falling into a few dozen branches flaring up and his sides protested harshly as he gasped in pain.

Hannibal was over him in an instant, his hands gently removing Will's from where he grasped his torso. Talons skimmed over his ribs, the bruises finally showing the aftermath of his earlier fall. Will winced, and Hannibal frowned.

"How did you get these bruises?" he asked. The dragon's eyes snapped up to Will's forehead and grasped the man's face, examining the cut above his brow.

"I, well, fell when I was… Climbing down the… mountain…" Will stumbled over his words as Hannibal's eyes widened in surprise.

"You what?" the dragon growled.

"But it's okay! I was already half way down the side of the cliff before I fell. The trees lessened the impact."

Hannibal's face was comically frozen in surprise before it darkened.

"Hannibal it's okay—ack!"

Will struggled as he was lifted into Hannibal's arms and carried away.

“Hannibal! Put me down, I am a grown man--”

“That’s up for debate, dear William,” the dragon muttered.

“that can walk on my own, and I don’t need you manhandling me!”

Will tried to kick the dragon, but Hannibal held him securely to his chest until they got to their bedroom. Will expected him to simply toss him onto the furs, but he found himself gently lowered to the bed. Hannibal left again before reappearing with the jar of magic cream. Will hissed as the cold cream was applied to his chest and torso, but Hannibal gently shushed him. He made sure the skin was thoroughly covered, moving from Will’s front to his back.

Will watched in silence, allowing himself to be moved and positioned under the large hands. The dragon was so gentle, and when he applied it to his face, not just his cuts, it caused him to blush. Hannibal didn’t say anything, but his thumbs chased after the trail of red, moving to his ears and neck. Will’s breath hitched, and red eyes met blue. They watched each other, neither moving as they gazed into each other’s eyes, a rare treat in Hannibal’s case.

Will blinked slowly, his head tilting into Hannibal’s palm. There was something off with the dragon. There was something different, but Will couldn’t grasp it. Hannibal must have known Will was searching for something, for he moved away to continue his treatment with Will’s arms. Will’s mind was in a whirl until he finally pieced it together.

Worried. Hannibal was worried about him. He didn’t like that Will tried to escape, furious even. However, the emotion that overrode everything else was worry. Worry and concern. Will could have seriously injured himself in his attempts to get down the cliff, broken bones at least and death as the worse. Will didn’t understand. He was just a human, nothing exciting or overwhelming about him. Why would Hannibal be concerned for him? He was a nobody. An outcast from his village.

“Are you hurt anywhere else?” Hannibal asked, breaking through his thoughts. Will shook his head, and Hannibal smiled. “That’s good. Do try to refrain from falling down cliffs in the future. You are a human, William, not a dragon. You cannot fly.”

Will nodded mutely. The dragon gave him one last look over before standing, the jar in hand. “I’ll be back. Please get some rest, William. You’ve had a busy day.”

While Will’s body was tired, his mind was wide-awake. His mind wanted to piece together why Hannibal, a dragon, would be worried about him, a little human that had visions and a sleep walking problem. Sure, he was Hannibal’s pet, but he was replaceable. There were plenty of other humans that were probably more interesting, saner than him.

And yet, Hannibal was worried about him. Him, of all things. No one has ever worried about him. People were usually worried that he would do something that would damn the village, but never actually about him. They could couldn’t care less about him.

Hannibal cared for him. Hannibal was concerned about his health. Hannibal was the one who saved him from death, who gave him a new place to live, who is in the process of helping

him with his visions and sleep walking. Will thought about the nights they spent together, talking, reading, or just simply siting silently together. Hannibal carding his fingers in his hair, or Will stroking Hannibal's scales, causing the dragon to purr. Will realized he was not just a pet, but a companion to a lonely dragon.

Hannibal cared, and Will's heart swelled with affection before it crashed into guilt. He made the dragon worry. After everything he did for him, he caused Hannibal to worry.

Will gathered a blanket around him before seeking out Hannibal, finding him just outside the tunnel to the treasure room. He turned when he heard Will approach, mouth opening, probably to scold Will for not resting, when Will wrapped his arms around him.

Hannibal froze, but Will didn't mind. He rubbed his face against the dragon's chest, breathing in his scent as he squeezed him closer. Hannibal finally raised his hands, fixing the blanket around Will's shoulders before wrapping his own arms around him.

"I'm sorry," Will whispered. "I'm sorry."

Hannibal rubbed Will's back silently before sighing.

"I forgive you, Will," Hannibal said softly. "Come, we'll talk about this in the morning."

Will didn't want to talk about it tomorrow. He rather they talked about it now, set the ground work for their living arrangements now before he caused more problems. But Hannibal wouldn't have it as he gently guided Will back to their room and tucked him into the furs.

"We will talk about it tomorrow."

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Winston ran through the caves and tunnels, giving Will much needed exercise as he tried to capture the dog. Winston's leg was completely healed thanks to the magic salve Hannibal used. Will was relieved to see Winston up and about. That relief turned to annoyance as the dog refused to stay in the designated areas Hannibal allowed.

"Winston!" Will shouted as the distance between the two grew. "Winston, get back here!"

The dog ignored Will as he continued to explore his new home, bounding one way and then the other. He seemed to glide over the coins and jewelry with ease whereas Will stumbled and slipped and slid as he ran after him. Honestly, why was he the only one who couldn't maneuver over the stupid gold. He was *part* of the dragon's horde.

Will came to a sliding halt when he came to the divide between gold coins and bare cavern floor. He heard the click of Winston's paws fade as the dog ran down one of the tunnels.

"Winston, come." After a pause, he added, "I'll give you a treat if you come."

Silence answered back. Will cursed and rubbed his face. Hannibal was going to be mad at him. Again.

Will wanted to regain Hannibal's trust by staying in the designated areas. He was glad Hannibal was away doing his dragon duties. Will still wasn't sure what Hannibal did during the day. He decided long ago ignorance was bliss.

Will paced the edge of gold, wondering if he should chase after Winston or wait for him to come back. A loud crash echoed down the tunnel, and Winston yelped. Will cursed and ran in the direction of the crash. The sound led Will to a dark cavern with very little light. Will back tracked and grabbed a torch to bring with him.

"Winston! Are you okay?"

Will jumped when something brushed against his leg from behind. He relaxed, realizing it was Winston, and he pet the dog.

"Bad dog. Hannibal will have our hides if we don't get—" Will noticed something in Winston's mouth. "What's that?"

Will tugged the item out of Winston's mouth. It looked like a long stick. He brought it close to his face to try and get a closer look. It was then he noticed the smell of something rotten.

Will gagged and dropped the object sending it rattling to the floor. He stumbled backward and turned to leave when his torch light fell upon the rest of the cavern. Will froze.

There were piles upon piles of human skeletal remains. They were strewn across the cavern. Some had fabric or jewelry holding them together. Some still had rotting flesh clinging to the bones. One pile looked like it had just toppled over. It would explain the crash Will heard. He gagged again and covered his nose. He knew Hannibal ate humans. But seeing this. Will couldn't understand. Hannibal could just eat them in one bite. Why would he leave the bodies to decay and rot away?

One pile of bodies caught his eye. They still had flesh and appeared to have been killed recently. Will drew closer and froze. He reached out and picked up the cross from the body of the village Priest.

Will blinked. His vision became red.

Screams filled the air. Villagers ran for cover as fire raced across the ground. The dragon landed in the middle of the market. Fear and terror raced through Will as he watched the dragon lay waste to everything in his sight.

The dragon then snatched up any villager he could find, hunting them down one by one as they tried to flee. He then set his sights on Will. Will dropped to his knees and brought his hands up.

"Please, I beg of you, have mercy." The voice of the Priest came past his lips.

The dragon laughed and lunged at him. Will screamed as the teeth ensnared him.

Will gasped. He dropped the cross and torch as he fled the cavern. He didn't stop until he reached the safety of the nest. He bundled under the furs and laid curled in on himself. Winston had followed and found a spot next to him. He whined, and Will wanted to reach out and comfort the dog. No doubt he probably spooked. However, he couldn't bring himself out of his cocoon.

Hannibal was still gone. Will wasn't sure how much time had lapsed while his vision played out. He concentrated on his breathing and his rapid beating heart. He managed to get his breathing under control, but his heart was still racing. Will closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Hannibal's scent consumed his senses. It smelled of cinder and smoke and just a small hint of something Will couldn't place.

Will opened his eyes. He paused. Usually when he closed his eyes the visions came back. Not as intense as before but lingered in the corners. He closed his eyes again, and again he saw nothing. It was curious.

Will released the breath he had been holding and unfurled. Winston got up from his spot and licked Will's face. Will gave the dog a few pats, his mind elsewhere.

As Will expected, Hannibal was displeased to learn he had left the designated areas. However, that displeasure morphed into concern and intrigue when he heard of Will's vision.

“You saw me destroying the village?”

Will nodded.

“Where were you looking from? From the villagers’ perspective or from mine?”

“I was the Priest.”

“Have you ever assumed the presence of another when you’ve had your visions?” Will shook his head. “Fascinating. I wonder if it is because you touched a token of the Priest’s. Or perhaps because you were near his body.”

Will shuddered as the image of the dead Priest came to mind. “Why didn’t you eat him? Why do you have a cavern full of bodies?”

“You don’t know? Dragons keep all kinds of treasure. Whether it be gold,” Hannibal picked up a golden chalice and examined it in the torch light. “Or the desecrated remains of our enemies.”

Hannibal looked up and smiled with all his teeth. He paused. “You are handling this far better than what I was expecting.”

“You’re a dragon, Hannibal. I know what you eat.”

“I killed them all. I destroyed your home.”

“It stopped being home after my father died.” Will confessed. He shrugged and wrapped his arms around himself. “To be completely honest, I’ve felt rather homeless for quite a while. Until now, that is.”

Hannibal blinked in shock before his face melted into a warm smile. He came close and wrapped his arms around Will. “I hope, dear Will, I can continue making this your home.”

Will smiled and returned Hannibal’s embrace.

“Thank you.”

Chapter End Notes

> It has been ages since I've touched this story. This chapter fought me like nothing else. I knew where I wanted to go but for some reason I just couldn't make it work out. I'm not entirely happy with it still, but at least now I can get to further chapters.

I now have an end goal for this story, but I'll still take your suggestions for chapters before that point comes.

Until next time.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!